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ABSTRACT

The Bell system is the largest nongovernmental employer of people in the country, and over 50 percent of the people employed by its systems are women. This paper deals with the new personnel policies concerning women within the Bell system; in particular, it describes the AT & T Management Assessment Program (MAP), the vehicle used to identify women with middle management potential. The MAP is a two-day assessment program wherein the candidates are observed in a variety of group and individual management simulations, and evaluated as Recommended, or Not Recommended, for middle management positions. Those women recommended are then offered the opportunity to participate in a career development plan. The paper also describes possibilities for advancement for women in nonmanagement positions. (Author/HMV)

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Changing Career Patterns for Women in the Bell System*

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The status of women employees of the Bell System is a topic that has received a great deal of attention in recent years. This is not surprising since the Bell System is the largest non-governmental employer of people in the country. And, over 50% of the people we employ are women. In addition, we are engaged in a service just about everyone uses. The telephone is so interwoven a part of our social fabric that Ma Bell is nearly as much a household word as Uncle Sam. Consequently, when our personnel policies came under scrutiny a few years ago, it was news, and received extensive publicity. But news, by definition, doesn't stay news.

And so, what's actually happening now within the System, to the hundreds of thousands of women who work for us, hasn't been making much news lately outside the System. But there's a lot going on, and I'd like to share some of it with you today, to cover at least some of the highlights in the short time available.

First of all, as many of you have probably observed, women and men are not all in "traditional" jobs. Growing numbers of men are working as telephone operators. Increasing numbers of women are working at telephone craft jobs, such as installation and repair functions.

What kind of numbers I'm talking about and the growth in them since 1971 is shown below. Since numbers alone don't mean much, I've given percents too - the percent of operators who are male; the percent of craft workers who are female.

* Paper presented at the 82nd Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, New Orleans, 1974.

Non-Management People in "Nontraditional" Jobs

	Year					
	1971		1972		1973	
Job Type	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Operators (Men)	426	0.3	2115	1.4	6817	4.6
Craft Workers (Women)	2968	1.4	5528	2.5	9693	4.3

Two things are very clear when these figures are examined. First, very obviously, there have been enormous increases in the numbers of people in these nontraditional jobs over the three-year period. Secondly, more progress has been made in the hiring of male operators than women craft workers. Why is this? There are a couple of reasons we know about. For one thing, the operators job has a higher turnover rate. There's simply more room for new people, more opportunities. Also, many operators work split shifts, nights, weekends, and in general, unusual hours. This makes the job attractive to segments of the labor market such as students, moonlighters, part-time workers, etc., which include men as well as women. The craft job does not normally have this degree of flexibility. There are other reasons too, such as recruitment problems, training ones, supervision, etc., which are being researched so that the kind of progress shown on this slide will not only continue, but accelerate.

The increasing movement away from sex-stereotyping of jobs is also reflected in changes in our management work force. This data deals with the number and percent of women at different levels of the Bell System management hierarchy over the last three years. First level is supervisory management, second represents office managers and similar titles, third level and above covers middle and higher-level managers.

Women in the Management Work Force

Management Level	Year 1971		1972		1973	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
First	55964	44.9	56071	44.8	57654	44.5
Second	3457	8.8	4628	10.8	5764	12.6
Third and above	224	1.4	320	2.0	417	2.6

As was the case with the previous one, this chart tells two tales quite clearly. First, the numbers and percents of women at the second and third levels of management has been increasing rapidly. Not surprisingly, the increase at second level has been more rapid than at third since women, moving up the management ladder must move one rung at a time.

That brings me to the second fact illustrated by the chart. Many businesses have few women managers at all. This is not the case with the Bell System, and wasn't, even before the current emphasis on the advancement of women began to have an impact.

We do have women in management, over sixty thousand of them, as these figures indicate. But they are concentrated at the lower levels.

In one way, this makes us more fortunate than companies which have very little female representation in the management ranks. In another way, it makes our problem - concentration at low levels - really stand out, as it does here.

Because we do have an enormous cadre of management women, our focus has been on upward mobility, rather than on recruitement. As you can see, there has been progress, and quite a lot of it, since 1971.

What I'd like to do now is discuss with you one of the vehicles used recently to identify women managers with middle-management potential and accelerate their advancement.

This vehicle is the AT&T Management Assessment Program, which was part of our agreement with various government agencies in January, 1973. These are some of its principle features:

AT&T Management Assessment Program (M.A.P.)

What? A two-day assessment process utilizing group exercises, an in-basket, interviews, and paper-and-pencil tests.

Who? College graduate women hired into management from mid 1965 thru 1971 are eligible to participate.

Why? To determine potential for future middle-management positions and aid in career development.

Since the mid 1950's, AT&T has utilized the assessment center method extensively to select candidates for promotion into management and advancement within management. Consequently, assessment seemed like a logical tool for use in the advancement of this group of women within the management ranks. Usually, our assessment programs are developed by AT&T and run by the Bell System companies using them. This program, however, which concluded a few weeks ago, was run by AT&T itself and monitored closely. The assessors were middle managers from the various companies who received three weeks of intensive training. Over a third of the assessors were women.

The process itself was not a new one, devised especially for this group or for women. Rather, it's one that has been, and is being, used by Bell System companies to identify middle management potential,

both male and female. The candidates are systematically observed in a variety of group and individual simulations of management talents, and individually evaluated as Recommended or Not Recommended for middle management positions.

There were 1826 women included in the eligible group. Of these, 1673 elected to participate in assessment, close to 92%. The choice of whether or not to participate was strictly up to the individual woman. All eligibles were offered the opportunity.

About 42% of the women assessed were seen as Recommended for an eventual middle management position. This rate is higher than the usual one for this process, indicating that we were dealing with a highly talented group.

Success has both immediate, and long-term payoffs for the Recommended women. They immediately receive a salary increase of $100 a month, and their names are placed on their company's promotion lists.

In addition, they are offered the opportunity to participate in a career development plan, an opportunity accepted by nearly everyone - 98 or 99%. These are some of the key features of the program:

AT&T M.A.P. CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

1. Each candidate is interviewed about her career goals and interests, and is given information about opportunities.
2. A written career plan, with a middle management target job is devised.
3. This career plan is reviewed semi-annually.
4. Progress of all candidates is closely monitored.

Each candidate is interviewed by the Company Coordinator in a one-to-one situation. The purposes of this interview are to explore interests, inform the candidate of probable future opportunities in various areas of the business, and talk about long-range goals.

A week or so later, the candidate, the coordinator, and the candidate's boss sit down to devise an actual career plan for the candidate - a plan with a middle management target job, job assignments, training needs, and time-frames stated. This is a written document, and all three parties have a copy.

Twice a year, or at the time the candidate changes job assignments or bosses, the plan is reviewed. Also, on a semi-annual basis, the Coordinator reports to headquarters the candidate's current job assignment, performance rating, promotability rating, salary, and other information, so that changes in the last six months can be monitored.

This is quite a comprehensive program for this group of women. But what about other women, not in this group?

Here again, we make extensive use of assessment programs. Some questions have been raised about the use of assessment. Is there an adverse impact on women? The answer is no.

This data is from our program designed for selecting potential first-level managers from the ranks of non-management employees - the Personnel Assessment Program. It's drawn from our computer file of operational assessment program results, and while it doesn't include all the Bell System companies, it includes about 10 companies, data over a seven-year period, and pretty good-sized n's. The men's data is drawn from an article by Joel Moses (Studies in Personnel Psychology, 1972, 4, 7-12).

Percent Receiving Various Assessment Ratings

Rating	Men (N = 8885)	Women (N = 4846)
More than Acceptable	7.2	6.1
Acceptable	25.6	28.1
Questionable	32.7	29.0
Not Acceptable	34.5	36.8

There simply isn't any meaningful difference in overall performance shown here. Data from our other assessment programs points in the same direction, although the n's aren't as large. Our experience has constantly been that assessment is as valuable a technique for the assessment of women as of men.

As well as no adverse impact, the results of assessment are similarly utilized. This data shows the correlations of the overall assessment rating and three other variables with management level. People assessed during the last two years are not included here, since advancement doesn't happen immediately after assessment except in very rare instances. This is a correlation that builds with the years, as more individuals reach the top level they will eventually achieve.

Correlations between Management Level and Assessment Variables

Variable	Men (N = 5943)	Women (N = 4846)
Overall Rating	.44	.37
Organizing and Planning	.34	.30
Decision Making	.34	.28
Leadership	.38	.26

Correlations for both men and women are, obviously, very highly significant with n's like these. While the women's correlations are slightly lower, this file, as I indicated earlier, covers a seven-year period, and proportionately more of the women have been assessed in recent years. Thus, the average woman in this file was assessed more recently than the average man, and has had less time to advance. Probably then, the correlations will be even more nearly equal a few years from now. But as they are now, they clearly show that our assessment process has no adverse impact, and is utilized by the companies in making promotional decisions about both men and women.

More and more we are beginning to realize that even this is not enough. A man and a woman of equal potential may both be promoted to the same job level now, but if they are not given equal opportunity for assignments and experiences that are developmental in nature, their potential will not be equally utilized. Systematic career development for all high potential people is needed to insure real equality.

The program I briefly outlined for the M.A.P. Recommended women is one such device. We have others in progress. Within a few years time, career development should be a reality for high potential non-management people, new management employees, and specialists in technical areas such as engineering.

The direction in which we are moving is the utilization of assessment as a starting place for further career development as well as a selection device. Such an emphasis cannot help but accelerate the changes in the career patterns of Bell System women which are already in progress.